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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006291

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/RUS, OES/STC, EB/TPP/ATP, EB/TPP/BTA
HHS FOR WSTEIGER/PBUDASHEWITZ
ITP/MACKE/THOMAS, CMP/DLP/WETZEL
FAS PASS FSIS AND APHIS
VIENNA PASS APHIS
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ
GENEVA PASS HEALTH ATTACHE

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: **ETRD EAGR KPAO TBIO AMED TU**

SUBJECT: Avian Influenza Situation Update in Turkey

Ref: (A) Ankara 5119
(B) Ankara 6105
(C) Ankara 6138
(D) Ankara 6232

Sensitive but unclassified. Not for Internet Distribution.

¶1. Summary. Although there have been several suspicious cases of bird deaths in the Western and Eastern regions of the country, there have been no new outbreaks of Avian Influenza in Turkey. The Government plans to lift the quarantine restrictions in the AI affected zone by the end of the month if there are no new confirmed AI outbreaks in the quarantined area. End summary.

No New Outbreaks

¶2. (U) Since the outbreak was first announced on October 9 there have been no new incidents in Turkey. In addition, there have been no reports of human deaths or illness due to the outbreak.

Dead Pigeons in Istanbul.Dead Chicken Scam in Pathos

¶3. (U) There have been several reports of bird deaths in various regions of Turkey including Istanbul and eastern Turkey. However, thus far, none of these birds have tested positive for Avian Influenza (AI). There was a report last week that about a dozen pigeons were found dead in Istanbul. Lab results determined that the pigeons were free of AI.

¶4. (SBU) This weekend reports circulated that about 1000 chickens had died in the eastern part of Turkey and that the government had culled another 5000 birds. However, contacts at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs clarified that a Turkish poultry trader who had purchased 2,200 chickens in the Western part of Turkey and was transporting them to sell them in the East because of his inability to sell the birds. This trader claimed that 1,000 birds died upon arriving to the Eastern region of Patnos. Government officials do not believe that these deaths resulted from AI case, but rather may have been the trader's attempt to receive compensation money from the government, which is higher than the current market price. Nevertheless, government officials buried the dead animals and put a quarantine area around the burial site. In addition, samples were sent to the lab to test for AI. Lab results are still pending.

Future Government Action

¶5. (SBU) The Government of Turkey (GOT) has indicated that it plans to lift the quarantine in western area of Baliksehir, the site of the first outbreak, at the end of October as long as no new outbreaks occur. Should any new hen new outbreaks occur, the GOT would take similar precautions as it did for the first outbreak.

¶6. (SBU) According to the GOT and the Industry, the government has already reimbursed farmers for birds that had to be destroyed. This was good news for the farmers as they did not suffer any financial losses. Reports of this quick compensation from the government will hopefully encourage other breeders or farmers to inform the authorities immediately of any future outbreaks. However, if the government does not continue or is unable to continue compensating farmers at such a rapid pace or at an acceptable price, farmers may be reluctant to report future outbreaks. That could create a very dangerous situation in

Turkey since many private breeders and small farms depend on
their small flocks for their livelihood.
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